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ABSTRACT

This issue focuses on the historical and contemporary reality of the indigenous Pipils native group of El Salvador. This information is presented to help Salvadoran students living in the United States and their classmates learn about the history of the Salvadoran people. Spanish excerpts are included. This serial is put forth by the Network of Educators on the Americas, whose mission is "to work with school communities to develop and promote pedagogies, resources, and cross-cultural understanding for social and economic justice in the Americas." (DB)

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Central America in the Classroom

Quarterly publication of the **Network of Educators on the Americas** **Fall 1992**

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Sonsonate, El Salvador. On the feast of St. Lucas, villagers from Cuisnahuatl walk more than 30 kilometers to Jayque to celebrate a pre-conquest religious feast. When the first priests came, Catholic traditions mixed with indigenous traditions. These men are all speakers of Nahuatl.

Photo © Rick Reinhard, 1988

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-and-

Special for Spanish and Bilingual Classes

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Autobiography (excerpts) and Poem *en Español*

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To Our Readers

New Name For NECA

Since its founding in 1986, NECA has provided curricula, tours and workshops on Central America for teachers and students from a "critical" perspective. NECA's scope has expanded in the last two years to include the Caribbean and the Americas as a whole with projects such as Caribbean Connections and Rethinking Columbus. So that NECA's name and mission reflect the scope of our work and our goals for the future, the Board of Directors voted to change the name as of September 1, 1992 to the **Network of Educators on the Americas** and the mission "to work with school communities to develop and promote pedagogies, resources and cross-cultural understanding for social and economic justice in the Americas."

As demonstrated by this issue of the newsletter, we are not going to abandon our support for the people of Central America, but we will be broadening our focus to include critical, anti-racist teaching about all of the Americas.

About This Issue

There is very little information available for school children in Central America and in the United States regarding the indigenous heritage of Salvadorans. Typically if indigenous groups are described at all, they are the Maya (Guatemala) or the Aztec (Mexico). Even these nations are given limited attention and are invariably locked in the past tense of history. What do children learn from these lessons? They learn that a part of their heritage is not important and that a part of their heritage has no contemporary identity.

In this issue, **NECA** examines both the historical and contemporary reality of the indigenous people of El Salvador. We publish the information on the **Pipils of El Salvador** in part because they are the ancestors of the more than one million Salvadorans living in the United States today. This is a chance for Salvadoran students and their classmates to learn about the history of their people.

In addition, the Pipils provide all of us in the Americas a chance to explore the relationship between a "dominant culture" and "our own" culture. The conquerors attacked the core of the Pipils' culture--its religion, language, economy, and political system. Yet 500 years later there is strong evidence of the Pipil culture throughout El Salvador. What gave the Pipil culture such permanence? How can it be strengthened? For the last few decades people in El Salvador have been fighting to rebuild their country based on many of the Pipil traditions of communal lands and of respect for nature. (This is not to say that there is blanket acceptance of the old beliefs. For example, new traditions are being developed regarding the rights of women.) Although communal values are still under attack from the dominant culture, there is hope. "We still have our voices," says Adrian Esquina Lisco in the opening essay for this issue. "Our history gives us strength," says Beatriz in the excerpt from *Cuzcatlan*. (p.20.)

This issue also features an excerpt from **Rigoberta Menchú's** autobiography (p.21). Menchú describes the traditions taught by her family for generations and she shares the struggles of her people to preserve their human rights. She describes how society today ignores and oppresses indigenous peoples--"our costumes are considered beautiful, but it's as if the person wearing it didn't exist." She inspires us to join in her "commitment to our struggle [for peace and justice] which knows no boundaries nor limits." (Many additional readings for elementary and secondary schools on the Maya of Guatemala are available in the NECA publication, *Rediscovering America.)*

Readers are encouraged to explore which cultural values of their own they want to protect and strengthen--and which one's they want to change. How can we make those decisions ourselves, in our communities? What are the forces of the dominant culture, such as television and many textbooks, that try to undermine our culture? How can we defend against them? When students consider their own lives, what power do they have to change or sustain their cultural values? Teaching ideas to explore these questions can be found on p. 15.

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Staff/Contributors for this issue: Bill Fowler, Erica Gilbertson, Deborah Menkart, Katherine Rawson

NECA is a non-profit (501-c-3) organization of K-12 teachers, parents, and members of the community with local affiliates in San Diego, Los Angeles and San Francisco, California; Eugene, Oregon; Minneapolis, Minnesota; and Vermont. NECA develops and distributes curricula from a multicultural, anti-racist perspective, offers courses and coordinates educators' tours. These projects reflect NECA's goal of promoting peace, justice and human rights through critical, anti-racist, multicultural education.

Future Issues We welcome your teaching ideas/experiences, articles, and graphics for the up-coming issues:

- The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)
- The Books Project: Whole Language in the Language Diverse Classroom and with Parents
- Honduras/U.S. Neo-liberal Economic Policies
- Teaching about Race and Racism

New Name for Newsletter: Beginning with the next issue, the name of the newsletter will change to reflect the change in NECA's name and mission. Any suggestions?

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Mother Earth is in Pain

Adrian Esquina Lisco

Adrian Lisco, Spiritual Chief of the National Association of Indigenous Peoples of El Salvador (ANIS), describes the history and contemporary situation of the indigenous peoples of El Salvador.

In the time of my ancestors, before we were invaded by the white nations, the land and everything that it provided were the common heritage of all our peoples. The Nahuatl, the Lenca and the Maya knew each other as nations; our land was known as *Cuscatlan*—a large and powerful bird which carries the blessing of Mother Earth and which gave us all that we required.

My father has 114 of the white man's years and he tells me that when we lived at one with Mother Earth, there was a special day in each cycle of the calendar when the blue crabs would come out in the evening to dance in couples along the beach. We knew the rivers as the veins of our Mother Earth. Along their banks, new life sprang forth and multiplied. Our people would not cut trees or build homes along the rivers because from these Mother Earth provided for all our needs.

The land known today as El Salvador is rough and mountainous. But then volcanoes lined its valleys with rich soil, and there we built our communities and multiplied ourselves. We gathered together to build a new home or bring in the harvest whenever one of our kind would beat on the wood of the *guarumo* tree. When life came to an end we returned to our Mother Earth as she had brought us forth, naked—not entombed in a wooden box.

The Conquest

Then 500 years ago the Spanish came, with their long knives and their gunpowder to impose new rules, dividing the lands

Photo: An elderly couple in San José Las Flores, Chalatenango, El Salvador-- a zone of conflict during the 1980s. This couple recently received a visit from the owners of the house they have lived in for the last 7 years. Now that the war is over, the owners want to come back to this village. But the couple has no where else to go and they believe the peace agreement permits them to stay. There will be thousands of land disputes like this now that the peace accords have been signed.

The *tecomate* hanging on the wall is a gourd used to carry drinking water by peasants. This is a tradition that has been maintained from pre-Colombian times. © **Donna DeCesare**, 1992.

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into property and sending its produce to markets across the sea. In spite of their guns and horses, and their armour and their boats, they were driven back several times and had to return with more troops before they could secure a base in *Cuscatlan*.

The Spanish marked out their *haciendas* and guarded them fiercely but we still lived in our own way on the land that we knew. The invaders built towns along the rivers and pushed back the forests to make their farms without regard to how the land sustained our people. They killed us like the trees whenever we got in the way.

"Today the white world wants to pretend that all the aboriginal nations have been defeated and that a few white nations are now masters of Mother Earth."

• Adrian Esquina Lisco
Spiritual chief

Rebellions

In 1833, after more than 200 years of this invasion, our people rose up against the Spanish and created a new government under the great chief Anastasio Aquino. When the Spanish failed to defeat us with their armed forces, they sent in one of their holy fathers to persuade Anastasio that his actions were sins against God which could only be forgiven by his marriage to a white princess. Once the ritual was complete, the Spanish made sure of their victory by assassinating our brother Aquino.

Still the land was rich and what was left to our people gave us all we needed. Another hundred years went. Their towns became cities and their *haciendas* swallowed up more of our land, but the veins of Mother Earth still flowed with the fruit of new life. The Nahuatl, the Lenca and the Maya continued to multiply and mixed with the newcomers blurring the distinctions amongst our peoples. We became farm workers and many moved into the cities to earn money in workshops and factories. But the white world's conquest of our people could not remain incomplete. Repression was not enough; subjugation was the goal.

La Matanza

In 1932, people in the cities and in the countryside rose up against the harsh conditions and brutal punishments. The rich and the powerful replied with a massacre which can never be forgotten. They sent their armed forces into our communities and killed 35,000 of our people within a few days. Men were hung from trees with rocks tied to their feet so their heads would be severed. Women were forced to slaughter our animals and prepare meat for the soldiers before being raped and killed.

We were all accused of being communists as an excuse for the brutality. When the slaughter was complete, we were prohibited from wearing our traditional dress or speaking our native languages. And, of course, those lands which had remained in our hands were stolen. Mother Earth rumbled with earthquakes and hurricanes. The trees have now been torn from the riversides and 11 years of civil war have completed the devastation of the land. Now the soil is treated with fertilizers and pesticides to enrich its owners but we do not have enough to eat. When we have sought reforms to secure a basis for survival, our people have been called subversives and whole communities have been massacred. Mother Earth is in pain and we are dying from hunger and brutality.

Ecology for Whom?

Today, the white world talks about ecology but it is really only interested in saving what serves its own purposes. Today, the white world wants to understand the native cultures and extract those fragments of wisdom which extend its own dominion.

Today, the white world wants to pretend that the Nahuatl, the Lenca, the Maya and all the aboriginal nations have been defeated and that a few white nations are now the masters of Mother Earth.

But we still have our voices. And a few still know how to speak in our mother tongues. And no-one is the master of Mother Earth.●

Interview and translation from Spanish by Don Lee. Reprinted with permission from: The New Internationalist, *December 1991, pp. 16-17. (New Internationalist, P.O. Box 1143, Lewiston, New York 14092-9984.)*

The Pipils of El Salvador

Bill Fowler, Vanderbilt University

If you go to El Salvador today you will see very few people who look "Indian" in the way they dress or speak--yet if you look closely you will see much evidence of Salvadorans' indigenous heritage. If you look at a map of El Salvador, you will find many place names of native origin, most of them having derived from the Nahuat language of the Pipils, once the dominant Indian group of El Salvador. If you listen closely to Salvadoran Spanish you will hear many words that derive from the Nahuat dialect. Knowledge of herbal medicine is strong in El Salvador, and this art comes from pre-Columbian Pipil practices. Traditional agriculture is widespread and based on Indian techniques. Obviously, the heritage of the Pipils remains strong in El Salvador.

Pre-Colonial History

In the early Colonial period, El Salvador was commonly known by the Pipil name of Cuscatlan. Its indigenous inhabitants were descendants of several groups of Mexican migrants who had migrated in the 11th century from the central highland plateau and the Gulf Coast region of Mexico via the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. They migrated to escape a series of droughts that plagued central Mexico as well as to seek better social and political conditions. They brought their place names with them when they moved from Mexico, and scholars have long noted the many parallels between Nahua place names of Mexico and those of Central America. The route of the migrations took the Pipils from central Mexico to the Gulf Coast region—where Nahuat is still spoken today—south across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, and then along the Pacific coastal plain to Guatemala and El Salvador. Some Nahuat speakers continued southward as far as Nicaragua and Costa Rica, where they became known as the Nicaraos. In addition, a few scattered enclaves of Pipils were found in Honduras. The Pipil population of El Salvador probably numbered close to 1,000,000 on the eve of the Conquest. In addition there were probably at least another 100,000 Pipils in the southeastern coastal region of Guatemala.

The Spanish conquistadors who arrived in Central America found that the territory of western and central El Salvador was actually divided into two aboriginal Pipil states: Izalco to the west and Cuscatlan in central El Salvador. Cuscatlan was by far the larger of the two. To the west of the Izalco kingdom was another Pipil state centered on Escuintla, Guatemala, and between Izalco and Escuintla was a wedge held by the Xinca, an extinct language group that may represent the original indigenous inhabitants of coastal Guatemala. North and east of Cuscatlan lay the territory of the Lencas, possibly the most ancient inhabitants of El Salvador. All these groups were in close contact with one another. Although their relations were often hostile, both the Xincas and the

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Lencas were strongly influenced by the Pipils.

The name "Pipil" derives from the Nahua *pipiltin* which means "nobles" or "children." The term has often been explained as a derogatory reference by the Aztecs who presumably regarded Nahuat as a childish version of their own dialect. It seems much more likely, however, that the nobility referent was the more operative one since the Pipils, and other ancient Mexican cultures, were organized socially into noble lineages, and these lineages are yet another typically Mexican feature that the Pipils shared with the Aztecs and other groups of central Mexico.

Political Organization

The noble lineage was stratified internally, specifying its titular head, nobles, and commoners. Commoners were not members of the lineage, but were attached to it and were dependent on the titular head for land. The head of the lineage distributed lands to commoners and nobles in return for tribute and personal service. In the political sphere, the noble lineage formed a close-knit group of kin and subjects. Nobles exercised a wide range of politico-administrative offices. Political connections among noble houses were based on common descent from a single noble lineage. Thus, a single lineage often had several noble houses and lords, each with his own land and subjects. This pattern of sociopolitical organization is traced to pre-Aztec central Mexico.

Economic Organization

Pipil commoners were farmers, hunters, fishers, weavers, traders, and warriors. Agriculture was based on the widespread Mesoamerican cultigens of maize, beans, squash, and chili peppers. Other important food crops included tomatoes, peanuts, avocados, and amaranth. The most important commercial crops cultivated were cacao (chocolate) and cotton.

Cultigens: plants that are planted and tended by humans, the wild ancestor of which is often unknown, and sometimes known only through archeological research.

The hunters and fishers provided food as well as raw materials. The most prominent game animals of the Pipil area included white-tailed deer, cottontail rabbits, tapirs, and peccaries. Objects were made from animal skins, feathers, bones, and marine shells. Before a hunt, a deer would be sacrificed and its heart burned with rubber for the gods. Their method of hunting was to create a circle of fire in the forest, driving the animals to one place in the center. There they would kill their prey with clubs and arrows. In addition to hunting, fishing was also an important means of securing food. The lakes and rivers were abundant with fish which were commonly taken with nets.

Many women participated in the economy through weaving. Pipil women spun and wove cotton cloth from which a wide variety of garments was made. They made inks and dyes using plants and minerals: One plant they used was indigo, which is the source of blue aniline dye. They made red from the bodies of wood lice.

A vibrant system of marketplaces was serviced by professional traders who bought and sold foodstuffs, clothing, and other items. We know about the markets through Spanish documents of the early Colonial period. These same documents tell us what crops and goods were produced and traded.

The Pipil economic system was characterized by specialization in pro-

duction. An unusually complete tribute document dated to 1532, less than ten years after the *entrada* of one of Hernán Cortes's most brutal but effective captains, Pedro de Alvarado, and scarcely five years since the pacification of the region, provides details on economic production in the province of Cuscatlan. The data in this document indicate that cotton and cotton cloth were the most important items produced for exchange. Many settlements of Cuscatlan produced maize, beans, and chilis for trade in the marketplace. Very few produced cacao, and this crop was probably a production specialty of the pre-Columbian Izalco state. Other items produced by the settlements of Cuscatlan included salt, dried fish, pineapples, honey, and wax.

Warfare and Militarism

Pipil men served as part-time soldiers, and they were among the fiercest warriors that Alvarado met in the conquest of Central America. Warfare was endemic in southeastern Mesoamerica during the Postclassic period, and, of course, it was through armed conflict that the Pipil dislodged resident popula..ons and seized territory. Warfare for the Pipils, as for most ancient Mesoamericans, was an expression of political force and an important means of social mobility. Military orders were powerful social and political institutions through which highly specialized warriors achieved fame and recognition.

At the time of the Conquest, the Cuscatlan state was at war with the expansionistic Cakchiquel Maya state centered on Iximche, Guatemala. The Escuintla Pipil state was also at war with Iximche. Cuscatlan seems to have been encroaching on the territory of the Izalco Pipil state, and at the time of the Conquest Cuscatlan had taken control of two settlements formerly in the domain of Izalco. Weapons included *atlatls* (spearthrowers), lances, bows and arrows, and wooden swords edged with razor-sharp obsidian blades. Warriors protected themselves with thick padded cotton armor which extended to the waist and sometimes covered the thighs. Alvarado described Pipil warriors in a letter written to Hernán Cortés: "The fields [were] full of warriors with their plumage and insignias and with the offensive and defensive arms. To see them from afar was terrifying, because most of them had lances thirty palms long, all raised high." Pipil warfare was closely connected with religion, and no enemy was engaged without the aid of religious prophecy.

Religion

Pipil religion was very similar to that of the Aztecs. A specialized priesthood formed a special caste among the nobility. The priests, who are described in early historical accounts, lived in their temples and wore special clothing and accoutrements that distinguished them from other members of the nobility. Their duties were to perform rituals, to preside over ceremonies, and to act as intermediaries between the gods and the people. The Pipils worshipped a series of Nahua deities very similar to those of the Aztec pantheon. These deities are well known through ceramic sculptures and figurines, and they are identified through their close affinities with the gods of prehispanic central

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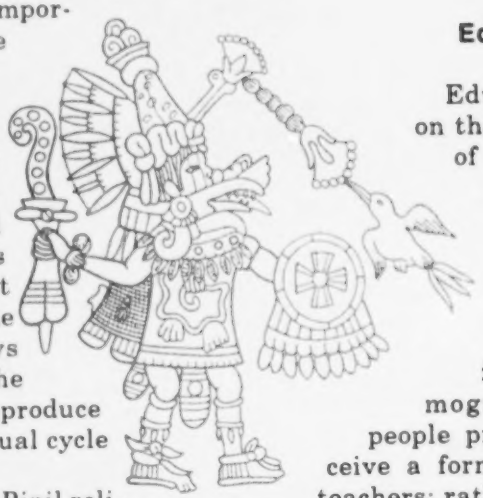
Mexico which are known through the chronicles. Among the most important Pipil gods were Quetzalcoatl (the Feathered Serpent), Tlaloc (the Rain God), Mictlanteuctli (the Lord of the Underworld, the God of Death), and Xipe Totec ("Our Lord the Flayed One," the God of New Spring). These deities were worshipped on different ritual occasions observed in the sacred calendar of 260 days which was correlated with the solar calendar of 365 days to produce the common Mesoamerican ritual cycle of 52 years.



Quetzalcoatl, from Codex Magliabecchi

The most remarkable of all Pipil religious ceremonies centered on human sacrifice. Two types of sacrifice ceremonies were described in 1576 by the Spanish judge Diego García de Palacio who probably based his account on an earlier source. The first was auto-sacrifice to extract blood offerings for the gods. The second form of human sacrifice involved the execution of human victims, usually war captives, by specially designated priests. These sacrifices were described in considerable detail by Palacio, and they are also attested by archaeological evidence. It is important to note that human sacrifice is a very ancient Mesoamerican cultu' al practice. Its elaboration by Nahua groups such as the Pipils or the Aztecs represented an extension of its religious function to the political realm as religious ideology began to play a role in state formation and maintenance.

The Mesoamerican ball game was an important ritual for the Pipils. They built pyramids with staircase sides for their temples. Next to the pyramidal temples were courts for playing the ritual ball game. The ball court was bounded by two large parallel walls with two vertical stone rings, one in the center of each wall. These rings were the goals. At the opposite end of the court were tiers of seats for spectators. The game was played with a solid rubber ball and players moved the ball with their knees and hips, trying to pass the ball through the stone rings, which was very difficult and rarely occurred.

Education

Education was based on the oral transmission of the knowledge obtained through the experiences of past generations. Rulers and priests received formal education in religion and cosmography. Ordinary people probably did not receive a formal education from teachers; rather, they were most likely taught by their parents. This form of education must have been very effective, since many cultural expressions are found in archaeological remains and close ties to cultural heritage are still preserved among the indigenous people of Central America today. During the Conquest, the Spanish attempted to erase this earlier culture and religion as "idolatry," particularly through the imposition of Christianity.

The Conquest

In June 1524, with the conquest of the Aztecs complete, the Spanish conquistadors looked to the south for new lands of riches. Hernan Cortés dispatched Pedro de Alvarado to Guatemala. He led his 250 Spanish troops and some 5,000 to 6,000 native auxiliaries from Mexico down the Pacific coast of Mexico and into the Guatemalan highlands, where they fought bloody battles against the Cakchiquel and Quiche Maya. The first Pipil groups that they encountered inhabited the Escuintla region of the southeast Pacific coast of Guatemala. After a brief scorched-earth campaign in Guatemala, the Spaniards moved on into El Salvador.

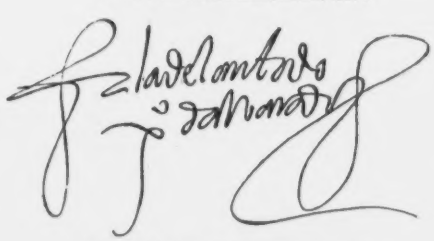
Their first battle against the Pipils in El Salvador was near the modern port of Acajutla, on the Pacific coast. The Pipils strategically situated themselves close to a hill. Alvarado determined that his soldiers

on horseback would not be able to attack the Pipils efficiently in this position, so he feigned a retreat. The Pipils, not suspecting that this was a trap, attacked the conquistadores with spears and arrows. They were drawn out of the refuge and into an open field. At this point Alvarado's men turned around and launched an attack on the Pipils. The Pipil warriors wore protective clothing made of very thickly woven, padded cotton. This precaution proved to be fatal. The stiff cotton armor made it very difficult for the Pipil warriors to get up after they fell on the ground. They were at the mercy of their enemy. Alvarado reported in a letter to Cortés that all the Pipil troops in this battle were killed. Spanish losses were also heavy, and Alvarado himself took an arrow in the leg which penetrated his thigh and lodged in his saddle. This wound would remind Pedro de Alvarado of the battle of Acajutla for the rest of his life, as it left him with a permanent limp. Five days after the encounter near Acajutla, the Pipils organized another large force near the village of Tacuscalco. The outcome of this battle was, as Alvarado put it, another "great massacre and punishment." Thereafter the Pipils shifted their strategy. Rather than gathering in large numbers to challenge the Spaniards on the open field, they engaged the conquistadores in guerrilla skirmishes.

Lámina XXVI

El Adelantado Don PEDRO de ALVARADO de Badajoz.

Don Pedro de Alvarado, conquistador de El Salvador (Tomado de Herrera, *Décadas*, Madrid, 1801).



Autógrafo del adelantado don Pedro de Alvarado.

Colonial Domination

The Spanish Conquest led to the incorporation of the Pipils into the European world system. This meant that the Pipils would now produce wealth for the Spanish empire, and their wealth was mostly in the form of agricultural production since El Salvador did not have the precious metals that became the primary objective of Spanish conquest throughout the New World. A system known as *encomienda* was established in order to grant land and Indians to Spanish overlords. This institution provided the principal means by which labor and goods could be extracted from Pipil peasants. The most important commercial tribute item was cacao, produced in increasingly large amounts by the Izalco towns. Important and influential Spaniards received *encomienda* assignments as a form of pension in reward for their services to the Spanish crown. A small clique of *encomenderos* who held towns in the Izalco region became extremely wealthy from tribute payments in cacao from the Indians. They not only received the cacao trib-

A weapon developed by the Pipil or the Xincas in Guatemala. A pile of rocks is situated beneath a stick suspended by a twisted rope. When the stick is let loose, the rocks are dispersed at a high velocity. Drawing from Fuentes y Guzmán in *Recordación Florida* (Sociedad de Geografía e Historia, Guatemala)

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utes that the Spanish colonial system considered their entitlement, but they also extorted the Indian. One of these cacao lords was said to live as if he ruled his own personal fiefdom.

The cacao industry had run its course by the end of the sixteenth century. Soil exhaustion, overplanting, and climate change combined to bring an end to this lucrative enterprise. By the 1580s, with cacao production already in decline, ranching and indigo (blue dye) production rapidly became popular pursuits in the former provinces of Izalco and Cuscatlan.

Commercial agriculture was closely tied to the decline of most Pipil settlements. In order to survive, many Indians found it necessary to leave their towns and move to the countryside. This trend had started by the middle of the sixteenth century, but with the rise of indigo production and cattle ranching as primary economic activities many Pipils decided to pass from the villages to the countryside seeking jobs and minimal protection from individual Spanish and ladino owners of ranches and indigo mills.

European disease also had a tremendous impact on the Pipil population during the Colonial period. Three waves of serious epidemic disease struck with tremendous mortality in the sixteenth century: smallpox in 1520-21, pneumonic plague or typhus in 1545-48, and smallpox and typhus in 1576-77. By the late sixteenth century the Pipil population was reduced to about 95% of its late preconquest level, and it did not fully recover until the late eighteenth century.

Resistance

Pipil resistance to Spanish rule in the Colonial period took the form of conscious and deliberate adaptation to the new conditions of existence—passive resistance couched in the new terms of economic, social, and political interaction. Revolts against the government did not occur until after independence was granted from Spain, and even then they were relatively small-scale. The most serious revolt occurred in 1932 as the culmination of the alienation of communal lands that began in 1881. The 1932 uprising was centered on Izalco. The peasants organized, as the poet Dimas Castellón-Mariano Espinoza describes,

> Over there in the hills
> ten thousand and more
> white sombreros
> are coming down
>
> Coarse cotton trousers
> and sharpened machetes
>
> The peasants evicted
> evicting
> are coming now
>
> Over there in the hills
> ten thousand and more
> white sombreros
> are coming now

The government's response was the indiscriminate massacre of at least 30,000 Indians—men, women, and children—over the course of just a few days. Peasants were rounded up and tied with their arms behind their back and shot. The repression of the popular insurrection was a genocidal act aimed specifically at El Salvador's Indian population. Believing that Indians were the backbone of the rural rebellion, General Maximiliano Hernández ordered his troops to kill

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anyone that appeared to be Indian, as evidenced by their clothing style and other outward features. Thomas Anderson, a U.S. historian who studied the massacre, stated, "The extermination was so great that they could not be buried fast enough, and a great stench of rotting flesh permeated the air of Western El Salvador." The memory of this brutal slaughter, known as *La Matanza*, is still fresh in the minds of many Salvadorans.

Conclusion

Many say that few Pipils survive today. (One estimate is that 2000 speakers of Nahuat live in the Izalco region.) As a result of the 1932 massacre, few Indians will admit to speaking the language, and most will not wear Indian clothing. Nevertheless, the Pipil heritage of most Salvadorans is evidenced by their culture which remains indelible in El Salvador.

About the Author: Bill Fowler

Bill Fowler is an archaeologist and historian. He teaches in the Department of Anthropology at the Vanderbilt University in Tennessee. We asked him to tell us a little about how he began to study the Pipils and his current work: "While a graduate student at the University of Calgary in the mid-1970s I went to El Salvador to participate in a salvage excavation of archaeological sites that were about to be flooded by the reservoir of a hydroelectric dam. I immediately fell in love with the country and the people, and I found many archaeological problems in El Salvador that deserved attention. After a couple of years on the salvage project I learned about the Pipils and of the need for research on these remarkable people combining archaeological and historical methods. I taught myself to conduct primary archival research and soon was working in archives in Spain and Central America in an effort to bring Pipil history to life.

In addition to the historical research, recently I have been directing archaeological research in the Izalco region of western El Salvador. Some of the problems that we are addressing in this project include the time of the arrival of the Pipil immigrants in this region from Mexico, the role of cacao in the pre-Columbian Pipil economy, the importance of irrigation in preconquest and colonial cacao production, and Pipil resistance to Spanish colonial rule."

Photo: Sonsonate, El Salvador. This 90-year-old woman lost most of her family members in the *Matanza* of 1932. She not only survived, but was one of the few to resist assimilation into the Spanish creole culture. She speaks Nahuatl. The fabric in her skirt is from Guatemala. There are no longer weavers who make traditional huipiles or dress in El Salvador. © **Donna DeCesare**, 1990.

For additional reading:

Barry, Tom. *El Salvador: A Country Guide*. Albuquerque: The Inter-Hemispheric Education Resource Center. 1990.

Departamento de Etnografía. *Etnografía de El Salvador*. San Salvador: Ministerio de Cultura y Comunicaciones. 1985.

Fowler, William R. *The Cultural Evolution of Ancient Nahua Civilizations: The Pipil-Nicarao of Central America*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press. 1989.

Note to our readers: This issue focuses on the indigenous presence in Central America. Following the national tour of historian Juan García Salazar, NECA will publish a special issue on the African presence in Latin America. There are many people of African heritage on the Atlantic Coast of Central America. In El Salvador, the only Central American country without an Atlantic Coast, the African presence has been smaller. However, Africans were brought in slavery to El Salvador as early as the 16th century and throughout the colonial period. They were brought primarily for agricultural and ranching work, as well as for work in the indigo mills.

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The Legacy of the Pipil Culture

The influence of the ancient Pipil culture can be seen in many aspects of contemporary Salvadoran life. Below are just a few examples. Most of this information is derived from a publication titled: *Etnografía de El Salvador* published in 1985 by the Ministry of Culture and Communications, San Salvador.

Cooking

Corn has played an important role in both the material and spiritual life of El Salvador. In prehispanic times, corn was a basic part of the daily diet and it was also an integral part of the religion. Present-day Salvadoran cooking reflects the traditions of the ancient Salvadorans, corn playing as important a role today as it did 10 centuries ago.

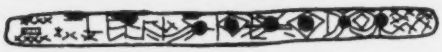
Many traditional foods are based on corn, such as:

- tamales
- tortillas
- atol: a hot drink made of ground corn
- sauces
- chicha de maiz: an alcoholic drink
- café de maiz: a coffee-like drink made of toasted corn.

Also typical in El Salvador are pupusas, tortillas stuffed with pork, cheese, or beans.

Other basic foods which have been traditional since ancient times include beans, squash, and other plants native to the region. Traditional drinks include coffee and chocolate.

Musical Instruments



Many of the traditional musical instruments of El Salvador have their roots in pre-hispanic customs. In pre-hispanic times, music was used during ritual ceremonies and other important events such as weddings, initiation ceremonies, etc. Some of the instruments in use during those times were drums, turtle shells, maracas, and wind instruments such as flutes, whistles, sea shells, and trumpets. Many of these had a symbolic character, for example, sea shells represented fertility. Pre-hispanic musical instruments are still in use in many Salvadoran communities and are played during important religious festivities.

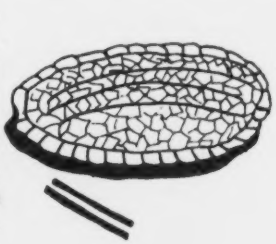
Other traditional musical instruments were introduced during colonial times, such as the marimba (from Africa), the guitar, and the violin (both from Europe).

SONAJAS

QUIJADA DE BURRO

SACABUCHE

MARIMBA DE ARCO, GUATEMALA (TECOMATE)



CARAPACHO DE TORTUGA

Health Care

In El Salvador there is an extensive use of traditional medicine, particularly in the rural communities. Traditional medicine incorporates an extensive knowledge about the causes of illnesses which can be attributed to physical, psychological and spiritual problems. Cures often combine the use of plants and herbs with therapeutic properties and specific rituals.

Among the physical causes of illnesses, sight and blood are considered important elements. One can have "strong" or "weak" sight; strong sight could cause an illness. Blood is also a determining factor. Many illnesses oc- ➢

TAMBOR

cur because "la sangre está mala" (the blood is bad) or "la sangre está débil" (the blood is weak.)

The knowledge of the *curanderos* (healers) is based on a long tradition derived largely from indigenous medicine and in part from colonial European practices.

When a patient visits a *curandero*, they are asked questions about: what they have eaten in the last few weeks; recent physical exercise; exposure to rain, cold, sun, etc; their dreams and visions; and enemies who may have caused the illness. Their pulse is taken.

The office of the *curandero* includes an altar with images of saints, flowers, candles, glasses of water and offerings.

The *curandero* plays a particularly important role in rural communities. Here modern medicine is often too expensive. More importantly, modern medicine is often ineffective because it is de-humanizing and lacks a spiritual component.

Just a few of the dozens of herbal remedies used in El Salvador include:

Ajo (garlic): for inflammation of eyelids.
Albahaca (sweet basil): for dizziness
Maquilishaut: Anti-dysentery
Mora(blackberry): Local analgesic for toothaches
Ruda (rue): emetic
Tabaco: Anti-venom

Language

Many words currently in use in El Salvador have origins in Nahuat, the language spoken in the region by the Pipils. For example:

atol: from Atuli: a hot drink made of ground corn.
ayote: from Ayut: squash
cacahuate: from cacahuatle: peanut
caite: from cacti: sandal
copal: incense
chirmol: a condiment made of tomatoes, onions, and chili.
elote: from elut: green corn
milpa: from mili, pan: cornfield
mish: from mishtun: cat
tusa: dried corn husk
zopilote: from tzupilot: vulture.

TAMALES

Many place names in El Salvador also have their origins in Nahuat. Following are just a few. Can you find them on the map?

Ahuachapán: from Ahuachia Apan: splashing river.
Chalatenango: from Shal, At, *Tenango:* place of water and sand.
Izalco: from Its, Sahl, Co: place of black sand.
Usulután: from Usulut, Tan: City of ocelots (?).
Coatepeque: from Cuat, Tepet: hill of the serpent.
Panchimalco: from Panti, chimali, co: place of flags and shields.

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El Salvador Today:

Developers Destroy Pipil Structures

Alison Becker
El Salvador On Line (El SOL)

One of the most important archaeological sites in El Salvador and all of Central America was partially destroyed in early August by bulldozers clearing land for luxury housing.

The housing developers ignored a government order protecting the archaeological site and continued to clear the remains of at least one of the four structures which made up the ceremonial, religious center of Cuscatlan, the ancient capitol of the Pipil Indians. The pre-Hispanic ruins had already been partially destroyed by the construction of a new, 26-acre Embassy complex for the United States.

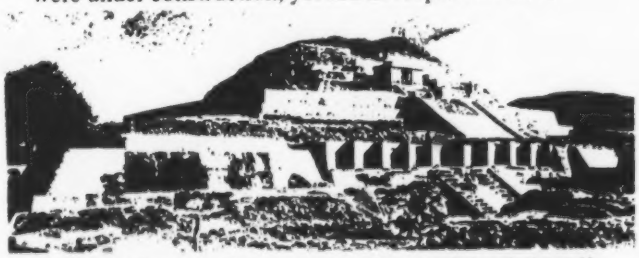
A team of archaeologists headed by Vanderbilt University doctoral candidate Paul Amaroli had been excavating the site since February. He said excavations of a mound hidden by coffee trees uncovered a "ceremonial structure" that offered new insights into the Pipil Indian culture. Security guards from the private developers armed with machetes forced the archaeologists from the dig in May.

The National Council for Culture and Art (CONCULTURA), the government agency involved in this case, has tried without success to protect the area from further damage. On July 6, CONCULTURA formally declared the site a "national treasure," invoking a law which prohibits development of areas so designated. However, CONCULTURA's efforts to have their protection order enforced have so far been ineffective.

"We have exhausted all our institutional resources related to the case," said Claudia Allwood de Mata, director of CONCULTURA, noting that only President Alfredo Cristiani or the Salvadoran attorney general's office could enforce the protection order.

Ricardo Navarro, the director of the Center for Appropriate Technology (CESTA) and the Salvadoran Ecological Union (UNES), accused the developers who destroyed the site of "true archaeological terrorism." He called upon the United States to take action to stop the "cultural and biological destruction" of the site.

"The U.S. Embassy is situated on top of a site of great historic value," he explained. Navarro claims that embassy officials and the Salvadoran Foundation for Economic and Social Development (FUSADES), whose headquarters is located near the embassy, discovered indigenous artifacts when their buildings were under construction, yet did not report the find.



The ruins of Tazumal. (This is not one of the sites being destroyed.)

Navarro recommended that President Bush donate the land and the new embassy complex to El Salvador. He said the site should be protected and the embassy buildings should be converted into a museum of natural and indigenous history in order to protect the indigenous cemetery on the site, to avoid further environmental destruction.

The embassy has denied any knowledge of any ruins or artifacts on the grounds of the $70 million compound. Representatives of the developers have denied that any pre-Columbian ruins of any kind exist on the land.

The housing development is owned by the Mathies Regalado family, part of the wealthy elite which has dominated El Salvador for decades. Mathies Regalado was one of the 21 leading businessmen indicted last year on charges of bilking a state-owned bank of more than $15 million in unsecured loans. But although the investigating judge found sufficient evidence to issue arrest warrants, President Alfredo Cristiani intervened and the charges were dropped.

Reportedly, Roberto Mathies Regalado contributed heavily to Cristiani's 1989 election campaign also.

Source: *El Salvador on Line--El Sol*, a publication of the Center for Democracy in the Americas, 2000 P Street NW, Washington, DC 20036, 202-452-8628. *El Sol* based the article on reports from: Associated Press 7/30, El Rescate 7/10; Miami Herald 8/10, Reuter 7/29, United Press International 8/1, Washington Post 8/1.

Teaching Ideas

The Pipils (Pages 3,5, 12 and 20)

- To our knowledge, no children's books have been written about the Pipil Indians of El Salvador. Students could write and illustrate stories of their own, incorporating the information they've learned about the Pipil culture. These could be shared with younger children at their school or a neighboring school.

- Make a mural or poster about the historical and contemporary life of the Pipils.

- Write a letter to your representatives in Congress and the Senate. Ask that they:
  - Vote against military aid to El Salvador and make sure that the United States does everything possible to support the implementation of the peace accords.
  - Support the demands of CESTA and the UNES (see page 14) to immediately halt the destruction of the Pipil ruins at the site of the U.S. Embassy and the neighboring luxury housing complex.

Cuzcatlán (p. 20)

- In the excerpt from *Cuzcatlán*, Beatriz affirms her identity as a peasant by naming everything that is important to her and her community. The *metate* is her favorite stone because it is has sustained her family for generations. Corn is part of the miracle of life. She can't imagine life without it. These items are disdained by the dominant culture. Yet Beatriz shows how one can define one's own identity in one's own terms. She shows the strength and security she gains from the exercise of naming the things she enjoys. Following are two writing activities to examine dominant and non-dominant cultures.
  - Rewrite the excerpt from Cuzcatlán from the perspective of the dominant culture. Brainstorm the tone first as a group. Remember that the dominant culture would tend to view rural, peasant traditions as "backward", "under-developed", "superstitious", etc. Compare this text to Beatriz's version. How does she endow her cultural traditions with respect and strength?
  - **The Strength of Naming Our Traditions:** Write a poem or short essay in the same style as the excerpt from Cuzcatlán. Begin by brainstorming a list of "elements" that give you strength when you face troubled times. These may be things that have been important to your family for generations or that have become so crucial to your lives, that you can't imagine life without them. These could be a favorite tree, song, painting, friend, family member, kitchen utensil or a family tradition. Pick one or a few to write about. Begin with, "Elements which are special to me...."

- Discuss how in the United States the dominant culture establishes itself as the "norm." (i.e. television shows and commercials, magazines, and textbooks.) What values are promoted? (consumerism, individualism) Provide examples. (Identity = brand names of clothing; Goal is to make it on one's own...) Who gains from the promotion of these values? Who loses? What values would you like to see promoted among today's youth? How could you pressure the television and/or publishers to promote these values? How could you promote them yourselves?

Rigoberta Menchú (p. 21-25)

- Read Rigoberta Menchú's autobiography in conjunction with a testimonial from another country, such as the *Autobiography of Malcolm X* (Haley, 1964). Both of their stories serve as testimonial documentaries of not only their own lives but also of the movements for liberation in their respective countries and times. A comparative reading of their autobiographies can be used as a comparative study of movements for social change. An article by Allen Carrey Webb in *Language Arts* (NCTE, April, 1991) recommends the use of testimonials in English classes. He suggests that other books such as Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1970) can be included in this genre.

- Menchú describes the indigenous custom of choosing a *Nahual* or animal to represent each new born child. Menchú explains that these are kept secret.

  In light of her story, what animal do you think would best represent the qualities she embodies? What animal would you pick to represent yourself? Why?

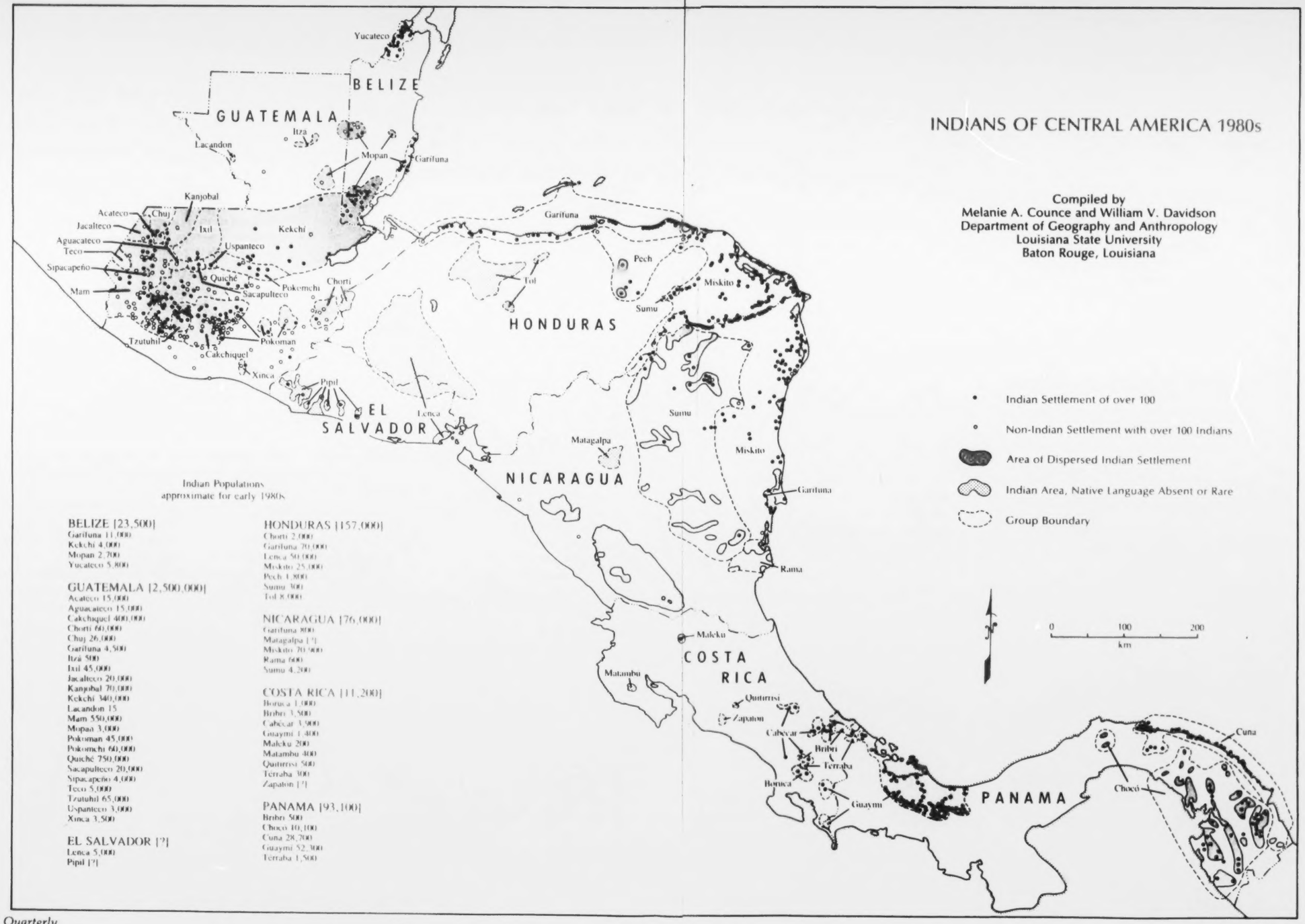
  Do other cultures use animals as symbols? Share examples (i.e. the Chinese years are represented by animals; the U.S. has national and state birds).

Tamales de Cambray (p. 32)

- Write a "recipe poem" using the same format which documents the elements which contribute to the contemporary violence in the United States. Alternately write a recipe poem which lists all the elements needed for peace in the world.

INDIANS OF CENTRAL AMERICA 1980s

Compiled by
Melanie A. Counce and William V. Davidson
Department of Geography and Anthropology
Louisiana State University
Baton Rouge, Louisiana



Indian Populations
approximate for early 1980s

BELIZE [23,500]
Garifuna 11,000
Kekchi 4,000
Mopan 2,700
Yucateco 5,800

GUATEMALA [2,500,000]
Acateco 15,000
Aguacateco 15,000
Cakchiquel 400,000
Chorti 60,000
Chuj 26,000
Garifuna 4,500
Itzá 500
Ixil 45,000
Jacalteco 20,000
Kanjobal 70,000
Kekchi 340,000
Lacandon 15
Mam 550,000
Mopan 3,000
Pokoman 45,000
Pokomchi 60,000
Quiché 750,000
Sacapulteco 20,000
Sipacapeño 4,000
Teco 5,000
Tzutuhil 65,000
Uspanteco 3,000
Xinca 3,500

EL SALVADOR [?]
Lenca 5,000
Pipil [?]

HONDURAS [157,000]
Chorti 2,000
Garifuna 70,000
Lenca 50,000
Miskito 25,000
Pech 1,800
Sumu 300
Tol 8,000

NICARAGUA [76,000]
Garifuna 800
Matagalpa [?]
Miskito 70,900
Rama 600
Sumu 4,200

COSTA RICA [11,200]
Boruca 1,000
Bribri 3,500
Cabécar 3,900
Guaymi 1,400
Maleku 200
Matambu 400
Quitirrisi 500
Terraba 300
Zapaton [?]

PANAMA [93,100]
Bribri 500
Choco 10,100
Cuna 28,700
Guaymi 52,300
Terraba 1,500

- Indian Settlement of over 100
- Non-Indian Settlement with over 100 Indians
- Area of Dispersed Indian Settlement
- Indian Area, Native Language Absent or Rare
- Group Boundary

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Overview: Indigenous Peoples of Central America

Guatemala

Central America's largest concentration of indigenous peoples is in Guatemala, where from three to four and a half million Indians belonging to 23 different ethnic/linguistic groups comprise from 35 to 50 percent of the population. Most of these are Mayan speakers in the Central and Western Highlands, where Guatemala's largest upland pine and oak hardwood forests survive. The Q'eqchi' (Kekchí), numbering more than 350,000, live largely in the central highlands region but have in recent decades spilled over into the lowlands to the north. Small numbers of Mopán live in the forests near the southern border with Belize. The Itzá, once dominant in the northern Petén region, have been reduced to a fragmentary population on the northern bank of Lake Petén Itzá. The Garífuna, the only non-Mayans among Guatemala's major indigenous groups, occupy the coastal stretch surrounding the Caribbean port of Livingston.

El Salvador

The majority of Salvadoran are descendants of the Pipils [see article on page 5 by Bill Fowler]. Although El Salvador's indigenous population numbers more than a half a million, the government and others often flatly deny its existence. The indigenous people have been stripped of most of their outwardly visible traditional culture, such as their native clothing and language. They eke out a meager living from seasonal wage labor on coffee or sugarcane estates and farming subsistence crops on tiny rented parcels of land.

However the Pipil heritage still survives today in the names of towns, medicinal practices, diet, religion, games, farming methods, oral history, and more.

Because the schools do not teach much about the Pipil, many people do not identify these traditions or their heritage as indigenous. Most Salvadorans consider themselves to be *mestizo*. There is a slow, but growing movement to rescue the traditional heritage and to identify with one's indigenous ancestry.

Honduras

Most of the indigenous people of Honduras live in the northeast. Following the pattern set in Belize and Guatemala, some 80,000 Honduran Garífuna live dispersed along the Caribbean littoral. Miskito, Tawahka Sumu, Pesch, and some Garífuna make their home in the northeastern region called the Mosquitia, which also contains the largest and most remote aggregate of intact natural vegetaion left in Central America. Each group occupies its own discrete territory.

Honduras' northwestern groups include two branches of the Xicaque (Tol) tribe, who occupy the hilly uplands of the Department of Yoro and the more isolated Montaña de la Flor region, and the Chortí, a heavily acculturated group near the Guatemalan border. To the south near El Salvador, the dispersed Lenca have lost their language but maintain many of their cultural traditions.

Nancy Conover

Rama mother and child.

Nicaragua

Nicaragua's Caribbean coastal plain is home to three indigenous groups. The Miskito control most of the land near the coast, including resource-rich lagoons and mangrove forests, and the Miskito Keys seaward. The Sumu live inland among the dense forests south of the Río Coco. The Rama's dwindling numbers hold on to several small settlements in the southeast. These areas of In- ➤

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dian habitation are the only natural areas left in Nicaragua.

Belize

In pre-Hispanic times, Belize was a center of Mayan civilization, but the population was decimated following the Spanish conquest. Today, Belize's major Indian population consists of more recent arrivals. The first of these, the Garífuna, are a racial and cultural fusion of blacks and Carib and Arawak Indians, who arrived from the island of St. Vincent by way of Honduras in the early nineteenth century. They live in small villages and one major city, Dangriga, along the southern coast. The second group, the Yucatec Maya, began slipping across the northern border from Mexico during that country's Caste Wars of the 1840s and 1850s. The Mopán and the Kekchí Maya crossed over from Guatemala during the late nineteenth century, settling in the southern district of Toledo.

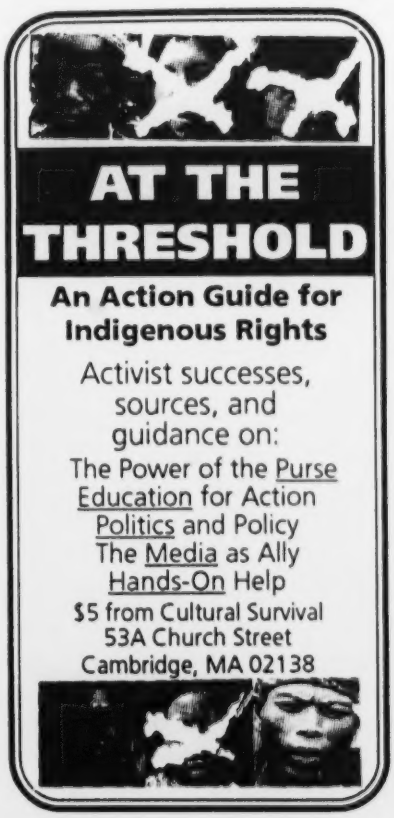
Costa Rica

The indigenous people of Costa Rica make up under 1 percent of the total population. Eight different ethnic groups are spread out among 21 officially recognized "indigenous reserves," but approximately 85 percent of the indigenous population is concentrated in the densely forested region that spans the Caribbean and Pacific slopes. Nearly all the inhabitants of the recently created La Amistad Biosphere Reserve, a binational park straddling Costa Rica and Panama, are Indian. The Bribri and the Cabécar are on the Costa Rican side, while more Bribri and the Teribe live in forested isolation in Panama.

Panama

Three of Panama's indigenous groups live on *comarca* homelands, autonomous areas granted by the government. They are the Kuna, whose *Comarca de San Blas*, granted in 1938, spans the coastal waters and the Carribean slope in the east, and the closely-related Emberá and Wounaán, who have controlled the *Emberá Drua Comarca* since 1983. The Bayano Kuna, who inhabit the Pacific Slope, are still seeking *comarca* status for their lands. Panama's other major indigenous group, the Guaymí, live in dispersed settlements spread throughout the Caribbean slope. ✪

Molas are an appliqué art form used in clothing by the Cuna Indians of the San Blas Islands off the coast of Panama. In the 1920s government leaders tried abolishing the mola, insisting that women wear "modern dresses." Many women refused and the mola has endured. From *Panama's Position: From the Threshold to the Present.* 1973.



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Cuzcatlán: Where the Southern Sea Beats

Manlio Argueta

In this excerpt from Chapter One of the novel Cuzcatlan, *Beatriz describes campesino life in rural El Salvador in 1981.*

...Ticha is my nickname. Age: twenty-four. Peasant background. Currently living in San Miguel, though I travel frequently to San Salvador; sometimes but not that often. I get off the bus near San Vicente to visit my two sons, who are living with my parents outside Apastepeque, near the lagoon.

Favorite pastime: reflection. Or daydreaming, some people call it.

Element of nature which is special to me: *metate*. It's a precious stone, made from the lava of volcanoes; my parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents all made a living from it. They made grinding stones. For grinding corn. We peasants grind corn using the strength of our arms. On a *metate* base shaped like a small washtub, using a pestle, also made of *metate*, we mash corn that has been cooked in water and ashes. The ashes help to soften it. After a few pounds of the pestle, which is also called the handstone, the corn becomes a spongy white dough, which has a pleasant feel and a very agreeable taste. That's what we peasants live on. We form the dough into a tortilla by kneading it with our fingers and palms, then we put it over the fire on a *comal*, or clay griddle. The tortilla is our bread. It is life.

No peasant home is without a grindstone. I used to help my parents make grindstones. That's why *metate* is my favorite stone. The flower I prefer is: mignonette.

I wonder where we would be without corn. Nowhere. We eat tortillas with salt our whole life. We *campesinos*, peasants. I grew up on them. We live and love on them. Sometimes there are beans. We also eat leaves, a lot of leaves; flowers of all kind; the top shoot of certain plants, especially pines; and herbs, quite a few herbs. Also, we run across small game every now and then: *garrobo* lizards, iguanas, rabbits, coati, pacas; or tacuacines, which are large rodents that are very good to eat, seeing as nobody eats their chickens anymore.

But we like tortillas with salt best of all. There wouldn't be a meal without them. Anyway, that's all we need to fill us up. because, of course, that's all there is..

To us, life is a miracle of God.

We must also survive. That's something else again.

They're after us. The authorities haven't been able to even look at a peasant since 1932 without being filled with rage. Now, half a century later, things have gotten out of control. There are no jails. If you fall into the hands of the law, you're dead. They say our country is too small for the amount of people who live here... They claim there are too many of us, that's what the problem is...

The advisers [from the United States] don't know anything about us. That's the problem. They come to our country in big airplanes. They tour the countryside in their helicopters. They wear dark glasses so they can't see our light. They drive bulletproof Cherokees. They don't speak Spanish. How are they going to understand us like that?

They are happy. We survive.

They're after us. They murder us. The most common cause of death for someone like me is decapitation. Dismemberment. Just as the conquistadors did five hundred years ago. They used to threaten you with jail. Every estate, every hacienda, had its own jail. Whenever a person didn't want to work for the *patrón*, the owner of the estate, he was jailed as a vagrant and a troublemaker. There's still a law against vagrants and troublemakers, but it no longer applies. Now they apply a swift death instead. If the advisers knew our history, would they still treat us the same? I don't know... Maybe they're not interested in hearing about it. We're interested, though, because it gives us strength. It teaches us to survive...●

Original published in 1986. English translation published by Random House in 1987. Currently out of print. Check at library for a copy and/or write to Random House to ask them to reissue this excellent book.

Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú

Congratulations to Rigoberta Menchú, 1992 winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. A Maya Quiche Indian from Guatemala, Rigoberta has devoted her life to the struggle to protect the human rights of the Guatemalan people. This is an excerpt from her life story, as told to Elisabeth Burgos when she was 23 years old. Rigoberta talks about some of the cultural traditions and the daily life of her native village, as well as the oppression suffered by her people. Her story has been translated into many languages. May her courage and dedication serve as an example to us all. ··

LA FAMILIA

Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú. Tengo veintitrés años. Quisiera dar este testimonio vivo que no he aprendido en un libro y que tampoco he aprendido sola ya que todo esto lo he aprendido co·· mi pueblo y es algo que yo quisiera enfocar. Me cuesta mucho recordarme toda una vida que he vivido, pues muchas veces hay tiempos muy negros y hay tiempos que, sí, se goza también pero lo importante es, yo creo, que quiero hacer un enfoque que no soy la única, pues ha vivido mucha gente y es la vida de todos. La vida de todos los guatemaltecos pobres y trataré de dar un poco mi historia. Mi situación personal engloba toda la realidad de un pueblo...

Lo que me recuerdo más o menos de mi vida será a partir de los cinco años. Desde pequeños pues, bajábamos siempre a la finca y cuatro meses estábamos en la pequeña casita que tenemos en el altiplano y los demás meses del resto del año teníamos que estar en la costa, ya sea en la Boca Costa donde hay café, cortes de café o también limpias de café y también en la costa sur donde hay algodón; ése era más que todo el trabajo de nosotros. O sea las grandes extensiones de tierra que tienen unas cuantas familias donde se produce la cosecha y los productos que se venden al exterior. Los terratenientes, pues, son dueños de grandes extensiones de tierra.

En la finca trabajamos por lo general ocho meses del año y cuatro meses estamos en el altiplano ya que a partir de enero se siembran las cosechas. Regresamos un mes al altiplano a sembrar nuestro pequeño maíz, fríjol.

Nosotros vivimos más en las montañas, o sea , en las tierras no fértiles, en las tierras que apenas dan maíz, fríjol y en las costas se da cualquier cosech· Bajamos a las fincas a trabajar · ocho meses. Esos ocho meses muchas · ·es no van seguidos, porque partimos un mes para ir a sembrar al altiplano nuestra pequeña milpa. Bajamos a la finca mientras

Photo by Jonathan Duffy, Guatemala, 1991.

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que crece la milpa y así cuando se cosecha ya nuestra pequeña milpa regresamos al altiplano. Pero inmediatamente se acaba otra vez. Y nos tenemos que bajar nuevamente a la producción a ganar dinero. Entonces, por lo que cuentan, pues, mis padres, desde hace mucho años, ellos han vivido, una situación muy difícil y muy pobres.

CEREMONIAS DEL NACIMIENTO

En la comunidad de nosotros hay un elegido, un señor que goza de mucho prestigios. Es el representante. Tampoco es el rey pero es el representante que toda la comunidad lo considera como padre. Es el caso de mi papá y de mi mamá, que son los señores elegidos de mi comunidad. Entonces, esa señora elegida, es igual como si toda la comunidad fueran sus hijos. Por eso la madre, desde el primer día de embarazo, busca apoyo en la señora elegida o el señor elegido, porque el niño tiene que ser de la comunidad y no sólo de la madre. La señora embarazada irá junto con su esposo a contarle que van a tener un hijo, y que ese hijo va a conservar, en la medida de todas las posibilidades, las costumbres de nuestros antepasados. Después de eso, el señor ofrecerá todo el apoyo necesario. Le dice "les ayudamos, nosotros seremos los segundos padres". Después, llegan otra vez, ya para pedirle un permiso al señor, al representante de la comunidad, que preste su apoyo en buscar un representante que vela, que ayuda al niño cuando un día esté solo y que no caiga en todos los errores que mucha gente de nuestra raza ha caído y un montón de cosas. Los señores elegidos nosotros los llamamos abuelitos. . .

Desde el día cuando nace el niño, se le hace una bolsita, donde lleva ajo, un poco de cal, sal, un poco de tabaco, que también el tabaco es una planto sagrada para el indígena. Ese morralito se le pone al niño al cuello. Esto significa que el niño sabrá enfrentar todo lo malo que existe. El mal para nosotros es como un espíritu, que sólo imaginamos que existe. Un mal sería que el niño sea chismoso; el niño sabrá respetar todo, el niño será sincero y sabrá decir la verdad. Y, al mismo tiempo el niño sabrá acumular y guardar todo lo que sea de nuestros antepasados. Es un poco la idea del morral. Y un poco para alejar el mal pues el niño tendrá que seguir siendo puro.

EL NAHUAL

Todo niño nace con su nahual. Su nahual es como su sombra. Van a vivir paralelamente y casi siempre es un animal el nahual. El niño tiene que dialogar con la naturaleza. Para nosotros el nahual es un representante de la tierra, un representante de los animales y un representante del agua y del sol. Y todo eso hace que nosotros nos formemos una imagen de ese representante. Es como una persona paralela al hombre. . .

Nosotros tenemos divididos los días en perros, en gatos, en toros, en pájaros. Cada día tiene un nahual. Si el niño nació el día miércoles, por ejemplo, su nahual sería una ovejita. El nahual está determinado por el día del nacimiento. Entonces para ese niño, todos los miércoles son su día especial. Si el niño nació el martes es la peor situación que tiene el niño porque será muy enojado. Los papás saben la actitud del niño de acuerdo con el día que nació. Porque si le tocó como nahualito un toro, los papás dicen que el torito siempre se enoja. Al gato le gustará pelear mucho con sus hermanitos. . .

Yo no puedo decir cuál es mi nahual porque es uno de nuestros secretos.

LA NATURALEZA. LA TIERRA MADRE DEL HOMBRE.

Entonces también desde niños recibimos una educación diferente de la que tienen

los blancos, los ladinos. Nosotros, los indígenas, tenemos más contacto con la naturaleza. Por eso nos dicen politeístas. Pero, sin embargo, no somos politeístas... o, si lo somos, sería bueno, porque es nuestra cultura, nuestras costumbres. De que nosotros adoramos, no es que adoremos, sino que respetamos una serie de cosas de la naturaleza. Las cosas más importantes para nosotros. Por ejemplo, el agua es algo sagrado. La explicación que nos dan nuestros padres desde niños es que no hay que desperdiciar el agua, aunque haya. El agua es algo puro, es algo limpio y es algo que da vida al hombre. Sin el agua no se puede vivir, tampoco hubieran podido vivir nuestros antepasados. Entonces, el agua la tenemos como algo sagrado y eso está en la mente desde niños y nunca se le quita a uno de pensar que el agua es algo puro. Tenemos la tierra. Nuestros padres nos dicen "Hijos, la tierra es la madre de hombre porque es la que da de comer al hombre." Y más, nosotros que nos basamos en el cultivo, porque nosotros los indígenas comemos maíz, fríjol y yerbas del campo y no sabemos comer, por ejemplo, jamón o queso, cosas compuestas con aparatos, con máquinas. Entonces, se considera que la tierra es la madre del hombre. Y de hecho nuestros padres nos enseñan a respetar esa tierra. Sólo se puede herir la tierra cuando hay necesidad. Esa concepción hace que antes de sembrar nuestra milpa, tenemos que pedirle permiso a la tierra. Existe el pom, el copal, es el elemento sagrado para el indígena, para expresar el sentimiento ante la tierra, para que la tierra se pueda cultivar.

El copal es una goma que da un árbol y esa goma tiene un olor como incienso. Entonces se quema y da un olor bastante fuerte. Un humo con un olor muy sabroso, muy rico. Cuando se pide permiso a la tierra, antes de cultivarla, se hace una ceremonia. Nosotros nos basamos mucho en la candela, el agua, la cal. En primer lugar se le pone una candela al representante de la tierra, del agua, del maíz, que es la comida del hombre. Se considera, según los antepasados, que nosotros los indígenas estamos hechos de maíz. Estamos hechos del maíz blanco y del maíz amarillo, según nuestros antepasados. Entonces, eso se toma en cuenta. Y luego la candela, que representa al hombre como un hijo de la naturaleza, del universo. Entonces, se ponen esas candelas y se unen todos los miembros de la familia a rezar. Más que todo pidiéndole permiso a la tierra, que dé una buena cosecha. También se reza a nuestros antepasados, mencionándoles sus oraciones, que hace tiempo, hace mucho tiempo, existen.

CONFLICTO CON LOS TERRATENIENTES.

Mi padre luchó veintidós años defendiendo, librando su heroica lucha en contra de los terratenientes que querían despojarnos de la tierra, a nosotros y a los vecinos. Cuando nuestra pequeña tierra ya daba cosecha después de muchos años y que el pueblo tenía ya grandes cultivos, aparecieron dos terratenientes...

Nos echaron la primera vez de las casas, si no me equivoco, fue el año 1967. Nos echaron de la aldea, de la casa. Todos los vecinos sacaron las cosas... Sacaron a todos de sus casas. Luego, entraron a sacar todas las cosas de los indígenas. Me recuerdo que en este tiempo, guardaba mi mamá sus collares de plata, recuerdos de sus abuelitos y que nunca apareció más todo eso. Todo se lo robaron. Después nuestros trastos, nuestras ollas de barro, los sacaron. Desde lejos los tiraban. Y, ay Dios, llegaban al suelo y ya estaban quebrados todos. Todos nuestros platos, nuestros vasos, nuestras ollas. Los tiraron y se rompieron todos. . .

Mataron a nuestros animales. Mataron a muchos perros. Y para nosotros los indígenas, que maten un animal es como si también hubieran matado a una persona. Nosotros estimamos mucho todas las cosas que hay en la naturaleza. Para nosotros eran grandes heridas el hecho de que hayan matado a nuestros animales. . .

Así fue cuando mi papá se dispuso y dijo: "Si me matan, tan sólo por defender

esa tierra que nos corresponde, pues que me tengan que matar." . . .

AUTODEFENSA EN LA ALDEA

Empezamos a organizarnos. No tenía nombre nuestra organización. Todos empezamos a recordarnos de las trampas de nuestros antepasados. Dicen que hacían trampas en sus casas; hacían trampas en el camino, cuando llegaron los conquistadores, que eran los españoles. Que nuestros antepasados eran combativos. Eran gentes. Eran mentiras lo que dicen los blancos que nuestros antepasados no supieron defenderse. Porque usaban trampas. Eso es lo que decían los abuelos; mi abuelo precisamente, cuando vio que nosotros empezamos a decir, tenemos que defendernos contra las terratenientes. Y si es posible echar al terrateniente para que nos deje en paz. Si ellos nos amenazan,¿por qué nosotros no amenazamos al terrateniente? Mi abuelo nos apoyaba mucho. Armábamos un lío en la casa porque mis hermanos sacaban sus conclusiones, yo sacaba mis conclusiones y todo el mundo sacaba sus conclusiones. Mi abuelo decía: "Sí, hijos, tienen que defenderse. Nuestros antepasados se defendieron. Es mentira lo que dicen los blancos de que nos encontraron durmiendo. Ellos pelearon también." Y nosotros, ¿por qué no vamos a pelear con las armas que usa el terrateniente? Si una persona mayor nos dice eso es porque es la verdad, pues.

REMEMORANDO A SU MADRE

Así fue cómo mi madre regresó al pueblo, y a escondidas va a comprar cosas para la comunidad cuando la secuestran el 19 de abril del 80. . .

Fue secuestrada mi madre y desde los primeros días de su secuestro fue violada por los altos jefes militares del pueblo. Y

Photo by Jonathan Duffy, Guatemala, 1991.

quiero anticipar que todos los pasos de las violaciones y las torturas que le dieron a mi madre los tengo en mis manos. No quisiera aclarar muchas cosas porque implica la vida de compañeros que aún trabajan muy bien en su trabajo. Mi madre fue violada por sus secuestradores. Después, la bajaron al campamento, un campamento que se llamaba Chajup que quiere decir abajo del barranco. Allí tenían muchos hoyos donde castigaban a los secuestrados y donde también fue torturado mi hermanito. La bajaron al mismo lugar. Al llegar al campamento fue violada por los altos jefes militares que mandaban al tropa. Después, mi madre estuvo en grandes torturas. Desde el primer día la empezaron a rasurar, a ponerle uniforme y después le decían, si eres un guerrillero, por qué no nos combates aquí. Y mi madre no decía nada. Pedían a mi madre, a través de golpes, decir dónde estábamos nosotros. Y si daba una declaración, la dejaban libre. Pero mi madre

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sabía muy bien que lo hacían para torturar a sus demás hijos y que no la dejarían libre. Mi madre no dio ninguna declaración. Se hizo la disimulada en todas las cosas. Ella hacía como si no sabía nada. Ella defendió hasta lo último a cada uno de sus hijos. Y, al tercer día que estaba en torturas le habían cortado las orejas. Le cortaban todo su cuerpo parte por parte. Empezaron con pequeños torturas, con pequeños golpes para llegar hasta los más grandes golpes. Las primeras torturas que recibió estaban infectadas. Desgraciadamente, le tocaron todos los dolores que a su hijo le tocaron también. La torturaban constantemente. No le dieron de comer por muchos días. Mi madre, de los dolores, con las torturas que tenía en su cuerpo, toda desfigurada, sin comer, empezó a perder el conocimiento, empezó a estar en agonía. La dejaron mucho tiempo y estaba en agonía. Después el oficial mandó a traer la tropa médica que tienen allí en el ejército y le metieron inyecciones, y bastante suero para que mi madre reviviera. Que mi madre resurgiera nuevamente. Le daban medicinas; la atendieron muy bien, buscaron un lugar donde estuviera bien. Y cuando mi madre estaba un poco bien, pues, claro, pedía comida. Le daban comida. Después de eso la empezaron a violar nuevamente. Mi madre fue desfigurada por los mismos militares. Aguantó mucho, no se moría. Cuando mi madre empezó a estar nuevamente en agonía, nos mandan a llamarnos; por todos los medios nos buscaban. Llevaron la ropa de mi madre a la municipalidad del pueblo de Uspantán. La pusieron en exhibición de modo que nosotros comprobáramos que mi madre estaba en sus manos. Mandamos a ciertas personas a investigar qué pasaba con ella, y lo que decían eran que nos presentáramos; mi madre tenía vida. Que mi madre estaba en sus manos y que la estaban torturando. Necesitaba ver uno de sus hijos. Así, constantemente. Habíamos perdido a mi hermanito pequeño, pero de mi hermanita yo no sabía si había caído con mi madre o andaba en otras casas. Nadie sabía. Para mí era doloroso aceptar que una madre estaba en torturas y que no sabía nada de los demás de mi familia. Nadie de nosotros se presentó. Mucho menos mis hermanos. Pude tener contacto con uno de mis hermanos y él me dijo que no había que exponer la vida. De todos modos iban a matar a mi madre como también nos iban a matar a nosotros. Esos dolores los teníamos que guardar nosotros como un testimonio de ellos y que ellos nunca se expusieron cuando también les pasaron los grandes sufrimientos. Así fue cómo tuvimos que aceptar que mi madre de todos modos se tenía que morir.

Como vieron que nadie de los hijos bajó a recoger la ropa de mi madre, los militares la llevaron a un lugar cerca del pueblo donde había muchos montes. Mi esperanza era que mi madre muriera junto con toda la naturaleza que ella tanto adoraba. La llevaron debajo de un árbol y la dejaron allí viva, casi en agonía. No dejaban que mi madre se diera vuelta y como toda su cara estaba desfigurada, estaba cortada, estaba infectada, casi no podía hacer ningún movimiento por sí sola. La dejaron allí más de cuatro o cinco días en agonía; donde tenía que soportar el sol, tenía que soportar la lluvia y la noche. De modo que mi madre tenía ya

gusanos, pues en el monte, hay una mosca que se para encima de cualquier herida e inmediatamente, si no se cuida el herido, en dos días ya hay gusanos por donde ha pasado el animal. Y como todas las heridas de mi madre estaban abiertas, entonces tenía gusanos y estaba viva todavía. Después, en plena agonía, se murió mi madre.

EL EXILIO

Así es cuando llega el momento en que yo salí de allí... Me sacaron los compañeros por avión hacia México. Me sentía la mujer más destrozada, más deshecha porque, yo nunca imaginé que me tocara que un día tenía que abandonar mi patria por culpa de todos esos criminales.Pero también tenía la esperanza de regresar muy pronto. Regresar a seguir trabajando porque yo no quería suspender ni un solo momento mi trabajo porque yo sé que sólo puedo levantar la bandera de mis padres si también me entrego a la misma lucha que ellos no acabaron, que ellos dejaron a medias. . .

Esa es mi causa. Como decía anteriormente, mi causa, no ha nacido de algo bueno, ha nacido de algo malo, de algo amargo. Precisamente mi causa se radicaliza con la miseria que vive mi pueblo. Se radicaliza por la desnutrición que he visto y que he sufrido como indígena. La explotación, la discriminación que he sentido en carne propia. La opresión, no nos dejan celebrar nuestras ceremonias, y no nos respeten en la vida tal como somos. Al mismo tiempo, han matado a mis seres más queridos y yo tomo también entre los seres más queridos, a los vecinos que tenía en mi pueblo, y así es que mi opción por la lucha no tiene límites, ni espacio. Por eso es que yo he pasado por muchos lugares donde he tenido oportunidad de contar algo sobre mi pueblo. Pero yo necesito mucho tiempo para contar sobre mi pueblo porque no se entiende así. Claro, aquí, en toda mi narración yo creo que doy una imagen de eso. Pero, sin embargo, todavía sigo ocultando mi identidad como indígena. Sigo ocultando lo que yo considero que nadie sabe, ni siquiera un antropólogo, ni un intelectual, por más que tenga muchos libros, no saben distinguir todos nuestros secretos.

Paris, 1982

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Ella

By Rigoberta Menchú

Arquitectura y belleza multicolor de la naturaleza
silueta del universo, rostro pecoso y marchitado
de tanto cortar algodón, café, y caña de azucar,
manos tiernas, creadoras, asperas y callosas por rajar
la leña bajo el temascal ardiente del padre sol.

Pies grandes, tiesos como las rocas
cruzando veredas, charraleras y caminitos
de la madre tierra, por donde sólo pasan
monos, ardillas, hormigas, bichos raros y pajaros
núnca vistos.

Quetzal enverdecida de esperanza y de futuro.
Quetzal de pecho rojo, rojo ardiente de lucha y de
coraje
por tanta sangre y tristeza que han visto tus ojos.

Es ella, es la Juanita, la que conoce el más allá
de una muerte, es la Xiba, la comadre, la tejedora de
mañana.
Es la marimba frágil de mi tierra.
Es Mariíta la patojona de doña Marta Zacarías.
Es la compañera que encendió fuego por donde
pasó.

Photo by Jonathan Duffy, Guatemala, 1991.

Voz hembrita de Quetzal, nietita de los mayas
siempre metida en el monte luciendo y viviendo
esa antigua memoria que pocos del mundo lo
conocen.
Siempre pintando uno por uno los hilos de tu Güipil
multicolor.

Siempre sumergida en tus hermosos pensamientos
sobre la vida y la naturaleza.
Voz artista, tejedora de Güipiles multicolores
que describen tu dignidad y tu hambre de justicia.

Es mi madre torturada, es mi hermana, es mi nieta,
es aquella que rectificó después de un señalamiento
colectivo.
Es la compañera que apenas culminó una larga
caminata por rumbos, charraleras, veredas,
subiendo y bajando cerros sembrando mucho maíz.
Es la mujer que guardó sus gritos y cantos de júbilo
para mañana.

Madrina, comadrona y curandera
del amanecer y de la luz.
Tu mirada llena, sincera, tranquila, tierna,
como las estrellas, el viento fresco y
los cantos del amanecer ye la claridad.

Es ella, la que cruzó fronteras y no le dió
tiempo de despedir el novio desaparecido,
la que gritó la verdad por el mundo,
dijo un discurso frente a militares asesinos
y no se le terminó la voz.
Es la que venció su miedo, aceptó ser acompañada
por la soledad de lejanas tierras, cruzando
fronteras esperando un avión de allá pa acá, de acá pa
allá.

Es la hija, la nieta de los mayas.
Es la que nació bajo el cielo azul.
Es la memoria de Chimel.
Es para ti hermosa mujer de mi tierra.

Poem reprinted from: **1492-1992 La Interminable Conquista:Emancipacion E Identidad De America Latina 1492-1992**

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NECA News

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Educators Tour to Mexico

The San Diego Educators' Committee on Central America (ECCA) and the NECA office will be sponsoring our first educators tour to Mexico in August of 1993. Elementary and secondary school teachers will gain a first hand understanding of the status of education in Mexico. We will explore school reform issues on the district and classroom levels.

Mexico City and Oaxaca have been selected as the focus sites because the issues faced in these school districts are related to concerns faced by teachers in the United States, particularly in terms of bilingual/multicultural education and the role of teachers' unions.

Participants will also explore specific cultural/social, economic and political issues surrounding life in Mexico--issues which have an impact on living and working conditions and family life. These themes will be set in the context of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the growing migration of Mexicans in search of work to the United States.

Time will be available in Mexico City for visits to the National Museum, other historic sites, bookstores and/or markets.

The total cost is $950 including accommodations, food, ground and air travel within Mexico, translations, pre-reading packets, and airport fees. Transportation to Mexico City not included.

Contact the NECA office for a brochure and an application.

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New Publication: Teaching About Race and Racism

NECA is editing a K-12 guide for staff development and classroom instruction. We are concerned that much of the multicultural curriculum and new school policies emphasize "overcoming stereotypes" while ignoring any analysis of the roots of racism or the structures which perpetuate it.

The goals for this publication include helping students and teachers (a) analyze the roots of racism, (b) investigate the impact of racism on the lives of ourselves, our family and our community, (c) examine the relationships between racism, sexism, classism and heterosexism, and (d) learn how we can work to dismantle racism in our schools, communities and in society at large.

Have you developed resources/strategies that you would like to submit for this publication? If so, please contact the NECA office as soon as possible. Our goal is to go to press in July of 1993. The editors for this publication are Margo Okazawa-Rey, who offers Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression training nationally to community organzations and schools and Deborah Menkart, NECA Director.

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The African Presence in the Americas Spring 1993 Tour

In March/April 1993 NECA will sponsor a national tour for Ecuadorian Juan García Salazar. The historian, storyteller, and community organizer will conduct workshops with teachers and students around the country about the history and contemporary situation of people of African heritage in Latin America.

"Our work begins with the collective memory of my people, the Blacks of Ecuador...Despite the constant pressure to strip us of our culture, including almost 400 years of slavery, our people have maintained in their traditions and in their legends, images of the past," says Salazar.

Recently a featured guest at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, Salazar is an experienced and talented teacher and an accomplished storyteller.

His presentations include slides, historical accounts, anecdotes, poetry and short stories that are accessible to a wide audience.

If your school district would like to host Salazar, please contact NECA immediately. Each site will be asked to pay approximately $700 for airfare and tour coordination expenses for a 2-day visit.

Teaching for Change: Classroom Resources

NECA has a new six (6) page catalogue of materials for classroom and school reform from a multicultural, anti-racist, critical perspective.

Could you help us promote these resources? Please call us if you plan to attend a conference or workshop and would be willing to distribute copies of the order form.

Your personal support would be greatly appreciated. Call or write to the NECA office. Let us know how many forms to send, the deadline by when you need them and where they should be sent (UPS).

Rethinking Our Classrooms

NECA Co-Sponsors K-12 Institute

Deborah Menkart

There is no textbook for elementary and secondary teachers on critical teaching. That's why 35 K-12 teachers and two parent activists from across the country came together for a 4-day institute this summer in Milwaukee. Sponsored by NCEA (National Coalition of Education Activists) and NECA this was the first time an institute on critical teaching had been held for public K-12 parents and teachers in the United States.

The participants *were* the text. Some of the "chapters" or questions addressed were how do we:

- help students read for bias and omissions in the media?
- help students see the systemic inequalities in testing, tracking, the curriculum, and school funding--rather than blaming themselves for their problems in school?
- teach for democracy in institutions that force our classrooms to be undemocratic?
- teach about peoples' struggles for justice in this country when the curriculum contains so little information?
- provide instruction which helps students critique the system while learning the skills they need to graduate and survive within it?

Sharing Classroom Strategies

Cultural activities launched and permeated the four-day institute. Each day began and ended with shared poetry and songs. These community-building rituals helped create the kind of caring and cooperative classroom we sought to take back to our students.

Our study of the politics of education was preceded by personal reflection and sharing about a time when we were treated unfairly during our own schooling. Participants' memories of discrimination based on their race, gender, ethnicity, or class painted a clear picture of the injustice in our education system.

Emma Cooper Harris, a parent activist from Mississippi, described walking three miles to school as white children rode by and spat at her from the bus. Linda Christensen, a Portland, OR teacher, shared stories of how her speech was used by an English teacher to show how "we are *not* supposed to pronounce things." Our subsequent discussion and analysis of the politics of education cut to a deeper level with the force and urgency of our own stories.

One afternoon participants read children's books and watched cartoons--read and watched critically, that is. Using charts, we recorded portrayals of poor and working people, women, and people of color and reflected on who made important decisions and who merely followed.

All too often, we found some groups were totally ignored or negatively stereotyped. We shared ideas on how to adapt this critique to the classroom and help students "talk back" to the biases. One example was a "Cartoon Report Card" created by Portland, OR high school students for distribution to parents.

One of our most useful activities, which readers could use with fellow teachers and parents, was a peer review of teaching ideas using four stages of multicultural/anti-racist education outlined below by educators James Banks and Enid Lee.

Four stages of multi-cultural/anti-racist education

1. **Contribution:** heroes, holidays, food.
2. **Addition:** content, concepts, themes, and perspectives are added to curriculum without structural change.
3. **Transformation:** curriculum is restructured to help students view concepts, issues, events, and themes from the perspective of diverse cultural and ethnic groups.
4. **Action:** students make decisions on social issues and take actions to help solve them.

For more information see the interview with Enid Lee in the October/November,1991 issue of *Rethinking Schools*.

Breaking into small grade-level groups, we described a lesson or unit of instruction we use. Then the group brainstormed ways to move the lesson up to the next level with the ultimate goal of involving students and ourselves in social action.

Taking It Home

At the close of the institute, we each committed ourselves to an action plan. For example, Sarah McFarlane (Seattle), Rachelle Resnick (San Francisco), and Lauryne Alexis-Boyd (Cincinnati) decided to invite local teachers and parents to form discussion groups on critical teaching. Groups will meet monthly to discuss articles in *Rethinking Schools* and their own experiences. Other action plans involve revising curriculum. For instance, Maury Smith's math students in Madison, WI, will study statistics on poverty, education, and incarceration to analyze the realities of racism.

What did the institute do for participants? Here are some comments from the evaluations: *...gave me ammunition, food and medicine for the year. ...gave me hope, direction and ideas--and a real attitude change. ...let me know that I'm not alone ...provided the energy to "keep our eyes on the prize".*

Plans are underway for a second institute to be held during the last week of July of 1993, immediately prior to NCEA's 1993 annual conference in Washington, D.C.

P-213 Woven Resistance—Resistancia Tejida. Salvadoran poet Roque Dalton speaks of the strength of his people. Full color print by Ricardo Levins Morales is 20 x 28. $6.95 + $3.50 postage.
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Action Alert!

Beginning in January 1993, Salvadoran multi-millionaires are planning to remove 5,000 farmers from a 2000-acre coffee farming cooperative called El Espino. The land was expropriated from the wealthy families in 1980 under a land reform program and the cooperative has been very successful. Now the former owners are pressuring President Christiani to return the land for their own development projects. Organizations like Neighbor to Neighbor of San Francisco are urging people to contact Christiani and demand that the co-op remain in existence with all of the land allotted in 1980. U.S. citizens can also talk to their representatives and urge them to protest this move. For more information, contact: Neighbor to Neighbor, 2601 Mission St., # 400, S.F., CA 94110.

FROM THE EDITORS OF *SOJOURNERS*

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Tamales from Cambray

To Eduardo and Helena who asked me for a Salvadoran recipe.

Two pounds of mestizo dough
half a pound of *Gachupin* loin
cooked and finely ground
a little box of Sister of Charity raisins
two spoonfuls of *Malinche* milk
one cup of seething water
lightly fried conquistador helmets
three Jesuit onions
a purse of multinational gold
two dragon's teeth
a big presidential carrot
two spoonfuls of informers
Panchimalco Indian lard
two ministerial tomatoes
half a cup of television sugar
two drops of volcano lava
seven *pito* leaves
(don't be evil-minded it is sleep inducing)
put it all to simmer
on a low heat
for five hundred years
and you'll see what a flavour!

By Claribel Alegria
(b. 1924 in Nicaragua, but grew up in El Salvador.)
Mirrors of War. New York: Monthly Review Press. 1985.

Gachupin: a nickname given to Spaniards who established themselves in Spanish America.
Malinche: the Indian interpreter for and lover of the Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés.
Panchimalco: an Indian city near San Salvador.
pito: a fruit bearing plant, leaves produce a sleep-inducing drink when boiled.

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